Family Spirit, Unity Vital in RFK's Life--Hannan

Prelate Praises Concern for Children, Poor

Archbishop Philip M. Hannan said during the Requiem Mass he celebrated Thursday night for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy that Kennedy epitomized the basic unit of Christian society — the family — throughout his life in his dealings with and concern for others, in his belief in God and in his politics.

The archbishop, a personal friend of the Kennedys, said the senator exemplified what a son, a brother, a husband and a father should be.

Archbishop Hannan recounted some of the experiences he had with the senator while he was pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Washington and lauded Kennedy's affection and concern for children and the poor.

FAMILY SPIRIT

He said the family spirit and unity was and is saturated throughout the entire Kennedy family, is absorbed completely by those who married into the family and lived completely by all of them.

"That family unity," he added, "was demonstrated so well after the death of President Kennedy. Their unity imparted strength to every member in that ordeal.

"The common sorrow only forged tighter bonds of unity. After that sad event, Bobby always included Caroline and John and their mother in his family excursions and vacations, trying to be a substitute for his slain brother."

BELIEF IN CHARITY

They believed in charity as a way of life, the archbishop said of the clan's concern for the underprivileged.

"His last impromptu speech epitomized his belief in democracy — that all segments of our people could be united and strive towards a common goal," Hannan said.

"Of course, he also expressed the bride or bond between those groups. That wish—shorn of political overtones—is now a part of our national legacy.

"He felt that he belonged to the poor and to the man on the street. He came frequently on weekdays to St. Patrick's Church in Washington, where I served as pastor, because it was located only two blocks from the Department of Justice. He never wished to be singled out."

RESOLUTION URGED

The archbishop urged that all turn the mourning for the senator into a resolution for spiritual renewal and to draw good out of the evil permitted by God.

"This heart-breaking tragedy presents a challenge and demand that we cannot shirk," he added. "We, his fellow citizens, must turn this violence into the good of the community.

"The good it must serve is the fuller achievement of the ideals to which he dedicated his life, the ideals of his country. This is the challenge that this country faces."

Earlier Thursday, Archbishop Hannan said he would leave here Friday morning to attend the senator's funeral in New York on Saturday morning. He delivered the eulogy at President Kennedy's funeral.

Gov. John J. McKeithen said he will accompany the archbishop to New York.